

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-10

SAB-01 SAM-01 /065 W

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R 031625Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2519

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS 717

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 2343

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, EG, XF

SUBJECT: GOE-PLO DISPUTE

REF: CAIRO 2309

1. EGYPTIAN PRESS AND MFA ARE CROWING AT WHAT THEY SEE AS A SIGNIFICANT STEPDOWN BY PALESTINIANS FOLLOWING TOUGH LINE TAKEN BY FAHMY WITH PLO OVER WEEKEND.

2. ACCORDING TO OUR INFORMATION, FAHMY ON FRIDAY TOLD SA'ID KAMAL AND RIBHI AWAD THAT EGYPT INSISTS ON EITHER FULL RETRACTION OF PLO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE STATEMENT ATTACKING EGYPT OR ELSE VISIT BY ENTIRE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE TO EGYPT. PLO DEL REITERATED PROPOSAL OF FIVE MAN DELEGATION, SUPPLEMENTED BY AN EXPLANATORY STATEMENT STRESSING ORIGINAL EXCOMM DECLARATION HAD NOT BEEN AMED AT EGYPT BUT HAD BEEN

WARNING AGAINST US PLOTTING. FAHMY STOOD FIRM AND OBTAINED
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PRESIDENT SADAT'S AGREEMENT THAT PRESIDENT WOULD NOT SEE

FIVE MAN DELEGATION. TO SURPRISE AND CONSTERNATION OF PLO, FAHMY THEN WENT PUBLIC, DICTATING TO MENA CORRESPONDENT SADAT'S REFUSAL RECEIVE FIVE MAN DELEGATION AND READINESS RECEIVE WHOLE EX-COMM.

3. AS REPORTED REFTTEL, PLO DID INSTRUCT VOICE OF PALESTINE SAME EVENING (FEB 28) TO "EXPLAIN" THAT ORIGINAL STATEMENT HAD NOT REFERRED TO EGYPT. NEVERTHELESS, EGYPT IS STILL INSISTING ON EITHER FORMAL RETRACTION BY EXCOMM OR EXCOMM VISIT. WE NOW UNDERSTAND FAHMY HAS AGREED RECEIVE QADDUMI WHO IS EXPECTED IN CAIRO MARCH 5, WHEN FAHMY WILL GO TO ASWAN.

4. CAIRO PRESS REFLECTS MFA SATISFACTION THAT PLO HAS APPARENTLY CAVED IN. AKHBAR HEADLINE SATURDAY SAID: "PLO SAYS: WE DID NOT MEAN EGYPT," AND ON MONDAY, SAME PAPER BANNERED: "RESUMPTION OF DIALOGUE." EDITORIALS ALL PAPERS STRESSED NECESSITY OF ARAB UNITY AND EGYPT'S DETERMINATION DO ITS BEST FOR WHOLE ARAB CAUSE. FAHMY MEETING MARCH 2 WITH KAMAL AND AWAD HEAVILY REPORTED AS IS MININFO MEETING WITH LARGER PLO GROUP, WHICH INCLUDED NABIL OMAR, HEAD OF CAIRO'S VOICE OF PALESTINE OFFICE, JUST RETURNED FROM CONSULTATIONS IN BEIRUT. AWAD AND KAMAL ARE STILL IN CAIRO AND TO OUR KNOWLEDGE DO NOT NOW INTEND GO TO BEIRUT.

5. COMMENT: INCIDENT HAS BEEN SALUTARY EXPERIENCE FOR BOTH SIDES. PLO HAS LEARNED GOE IS NOT SOFT ON PALESTINIANS WHEN EGYPTIAN NATIONAL INTERESTS ARE AT STAKE. EGYPT HAS BEEN REMINDED THAT ITS PREVIOUS LACK OF A POSITIVE POLICY VIS A VIS PLO SERVED PURPOSES ONLY OF EXTREMIST PALESTINIANS, SINCE IT ENCOURAGED EVEN MODERATE PALESTINIANS TO MAKE UNHELPFUL PUBLIC STATEMENTS WITHOUT FEAR OF GOE REPRISAL.
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